

## INTERVIEW WITH JOTAJOTA

**Parmenides' Legacy**

*We are at the corner of Oroño Boulevard and Intendente Morcillo Avenue, at the Independence Park, in Rosario. Juan José Luetich arrives to talk about philosophy in the time he has available between classes. We sit on a bench at the edge of the lake, behind the Corinthian columns.*

—Are you surprised by the impact that the first issue had?

—Yes, especially over the great many questions received.

—I know you already answered many, but I also want to ask you some.

—Go ahead! It will be a pleasure to answer them, if they are not too hard... [smiles]

—How important are the classics to you when you write about a subject?

—I use things that I take from the classics to build my own arguments, but if for the sake of clarity I must distance myself from them, I do so. However, I think about it many times over before setting off on a new path, to be certain that I have no other choice.

—¿Can you give me an example of this, in relation to the subjects of the first issue?

—Yes, of course. In the first issue I use the expression “second philosophy” to refer to the instance of philosophical thinking that follows the ontological definition. I know that in this sense I am moving away from the meaning that Aristotle gave to it, but I don't want it to be interpreted as “second rate philosophy.”

—Aristotle moved away from Plato when he felt it was necessary, by using a well known argument.

—Something similar happens to me. I respect the classics, but I am inclined towards clarity. [smiles]

—Also you can't bring together every classical philosophical system to build a single, coherent system.

—And the worst thing you could do is to force reasoning in order to accomplish that goal. Many times teachers and historians of philosophy succumb to that temptation. As for me, I don't syncretize, my purpose is not to harmonize nor reconciling doctrines.

—How do you differentiate between har-

monize and reconciling?

—For me, “harmonize” means “to make things that are different look good together.” While “reconciling” means “to bring different positions closer to each other so as to reach an agreement.” I think that neither the intention to harmonize nor the intention to reconcile are good starting points in philosophy. But I don't rule out that harmony or reconciliation may be achieved as the result of reworking.

—Did you encounter that situation while working on the subject of being?

—I encountered it many years ago, while studying Parmenides and Democritus. I will be talking about that in a future article.

—What do you think was Parmenides greatest contribution?

—Without doubt, raising the issue of “hide or appear.” That idea was understood by the ancient Greeks, but it got blurred afterwards, due to the translations. That is why, in this supplement, we dedicated two issues to clarifying its meaning.

—The way in which Parmenides chose to present the problem did not seem to have helped much.

—Parmenides lived and participated in the birth of an era. His poem has all of the characteristics of a work developed during a transition period. Notice that the author writes in prose but uses the forms of poetry, he gives a goddess the role he should have given a male god, and he uses the word “being” in its most abstract sense, hoping to encompass all cases...

—And thus he commits contradictions.

—I would not say “commits.” Those are essential contradictions that enrich his work. He was breaking away from tradition. For example, by using in his poem a language of little poetic value, he invented the genre called “philosophical poem,” a self-contradictory name.

—That makes the work a hybrid.

—That's true, but that doesn't mean that Plutarch was right in treating it as a work of poetry. Plutarch criticizes the versification of “The Way of Truth” by comparing it to the works of Pindar, but Parmenides was not a poet. You cannot be a philosopher and a poet. Philosophy

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sprouts as a reaction against the abuses of poetic language.

—Maybe that is why Borges didn't like to be called a philosopher.

—Of course, he had chosen to use poetic language, admired Robert Graves, and knew that no man could serve two masters.

—In your file we found a reconstruction of the Greek text of “The Way of Truth...”

—Yes, but I never managed to round it off, there are a couple of things that I am still not satisfied with. I am letting time do its work. As a tribute to Parmenides, maybe I will find something better than reconstructing the poem.

—Is it likely that the missing fragments contained something important?

—If my intuition is correct, there are two important things missing from the classic quotations.

—I get the feeling that if you were given the chance to use a time machine, you would visit Parmenides.

—If I was only given the chance to use it once, I don't know; but if I was given the chance to use it twice, I would undoubtedly choose to use one of them to listen to Parmenides reciting “The Way of Truth.”

*Juan José Luetich says goodbye in order to be on time for his next class. The last warm rays of mid-June sunlight are barely enough for me to finish giving form to these brief notes.*

**Juan José Luetich** was born in Rosario on January 24, 1964. He is the Editor of Serial Publications at the Luventicus Academy of Sciences and he teaches in mid and high level institutions. He is also the author of a volume of work spanning several areas: philosophy, critique, semiology, linguistics, anthropology, didactics, music, mathematics, chemistry, physics, engineering and computing. The works were almost lost at the end of 2010, when the author was very near death due to a cardiovascular event. This supplement is dedicated to rescuing the notes kept in hard copy including, among other things: articles on the basic principles of chemical thermodynamics, the reinterpretation of some of the basic concepts of statistical physics, notes on the interaction of the subject with the system under study, exegeses on the works of several men of science, articles on the subject of the theory of numbers, a theory for a new musical system, a book of piano études, notes on matters regarding Indo-European linguistics, literary criticism articles, moral and political writings, translations of ancient and medieval texts, notes on the origin of Western institutions, and reconstructions of ancient rites and cults.

**About this publication**

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